**PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN WALKING PREFERENCES SURVEY**
*Draft Report – February 20, 2009*

**INTRODUCTION**

The Walking Preferences Survey was developed as part of the public engagement process for Seattle's Pedestrian Master Plan. While not a statistically valid instrument, the Walking Preferences Survey successfully engaged more than 1,400 residents from Seattle and the surrounding region in thinking about what makes a good pedestrian environment and what motivates them to walk.

**SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

The survey instrument was developed by SDOT staff in consultation with the Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG). The final version of the survey includes two preferences questions with multiple answers, four open-ended response questions, and three demographic descriptor questions. Special consideration was given to the balance between open-ended questions and preference questions with check boxes because of sensitivity to the assumption that people with limited English and literacy levels are more likely to complete a survey with check boxes.

**Distribution**
Paper copies of the survey were available in eight languages (English, Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Oromo, Tigrinya, Amharic, and Somali) and in an English large-print format. The survey was also available in electronic format in English, via the Pedestrian Master Plan Web site.

The survey was distributed through personal and organizational contacts; no direct mailing was used. Copies of the survey were placed in all branches of the Seattle Public Library as well as in the 13 Neighborhood Service Centers.

The survey was scheduled to close on September 15, 2008, but responses were accepted through October 15, 2008. The date was extended to accommodate a number of events toward the end of September as well as additional outreach efforts that took place at the same time.

**Launch**
The Walking Preferences Survey was launched on May 10, 2008, in conjunction with the grand opening celebration for the Burke Gilman Trail Extension. Members of the walking and biking communities and neighbors of the Burke Gilman Trail joined Mayor Greg Nickels as he pronounced May 10, 2008 Seattle Walks Day. After the celebration, participants walked and completed surveys. In addition to this walk, residents across Seattle joined with their neighbors and walked in their communities.

## RESULTS

A total of 1,405 surveys were received: 1,066 online, 314 English hard copies, and 25 hard copies in other languages. The following is a profile the respondents; this information is presented before responses to the survey's substantive questions to give the reader a better understanding of those who completed the survey.

### Respondent Information

*Neighborhood or zip code where you live or work (Question 8)*
The table of zip codes and neighborhoods (Figure 1) indicates that most of the respondents were either Seattle residents or work within Seattle city limits. The highest percentage of respondents indicated that they live or work in Greenwood (9% of the respondents), Northgate/Lake City (7%), Ravenna/Wedgwood (7%), and the University District (6%). Approximately 4% of the respondents reside outside of the Seattle city limits.

| Zip Code | Neighborhood | QTY. | % TOT |
|---|---|---|---|
| 98103 | Greenwood | 131 | 9% |
| 98125 | Northgate/ Lake City | 100 | 7% |
| 98115 | Ravenna/ Wedgwood | 94 | 7% |
| 98105/ 98195 | U-District | 91 | 6% |
| 98122 | First Hill/ Madrona | 86 | 6% |
| 98102 | Eastlake/ Capitol Hill | 72 | 5% |
| 98101/ 98104/ 98111/ 98124/ 98127/ 98164 | Downtown | 70 | 5% |
| Varies | Outside of Seattle | 69 | 5% |
| 98144 | Beacon Hill | 65 | 5% |
| 98112 | Madison Park/ Montlake | 63 | 4% |
| 98116 | West Seattle | 61 | 4% |
| 98117 | Ballard | 61 | 4% |

| Zip Code | Neighborhood | QTY. | % TOT |
|---|---|---|---|
| 98126 | West Seattle/ High Point | 60 | 4% |
| 98118 | Southeast/ Rainier Valley | 56 | 4% |
| 98107 | Fremont | 46 | 3% |
| 98136 | Lincoln Park/ Fauntleroy | 41 | 3% |
| 98106 | Delridge/ Highland Park | 36 | 3% |
| 98108 | Georgetown | 35 | 2% |
| 98133 | Haller Lake/ Bitter Lake | 33 | 2% |
| 98119 | Queen Anne | 32 | 2% |
| 98109 | South Lake Union/ Seattle Center/ Lower Queen Anne | 21 | 1% |
| 98121 | Belltown | 20 | 1% |
| 98199 | Magnolia | 10 | 1% |
| 98113 | Woodland Park | 1 | 0% |
| 98134 | Harbor Island | 1 | 0% |

**Figure 1**

*Your age—five answer choices provided (Question 9)*
The majority of respondents were between the ages of 19 and 64, with respondents divided fairly evenly between two age groups: 47% were within the ages of 19 and 40, and 41% were within the ages of 41 and 64. A small number of children and youth responded as well.

| AGE | QTY. | % TOT |
|---|---|---|
| Under 11 years | 2 | 0% |
| 12-18 years | 15 | 1% |
| 19-40 years | 659 | 47% |
| 41-64 years | 571 | 41% |
| Over 65 years | 107 | 8% |
| No age response | 50 | 4% |

**Figure 2**

*Age of children that walk with you—two age ranges provided (Question 10)*
Approximately 25% of the respondents walk with children, most of whom are under the age of 11 (more than 75%). Less than 25% of children walking with adults are between the ages of 12 and 18. The majority of the adult respondents did not indicate that they walk with children.

| AGES OF CHILDREN | QTY. | %TOT |
|---|---|---|
| Adults walking with children under 11 years | 259 | 18% |
| Adults walking with children between 12-18 | 64 | 5% |
| Adults walking with children under 11 and between 12-18 | 13 | 1% |
| Adults that do not walk with children | 1019 | 73% |

**Figure 3**

## Descriptives

Because the Walking Preferences Survey is not a statistically valid instrument, analysis of the responses is limited to descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and highlights of open-ended responses. The responses to the open-ended questions might be further analyzed with a full qualitative data analysis process, including coding of responses, but this has not been done to date.

*Question 1: Why do you walk? Check all that apply. (Eight answer choices, listed below, and space for comments provided.)*

Nearly every respondent answered Question 1, with 1,398 (99.5%) responding. The most common reason selected was, "To get to shops and other businesses" (89%), followed by "For exercise" (78%), and "To get to the public transportation" (76%). Figure 4 shows the number of responses and percentage of all respondents per category. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the responses.

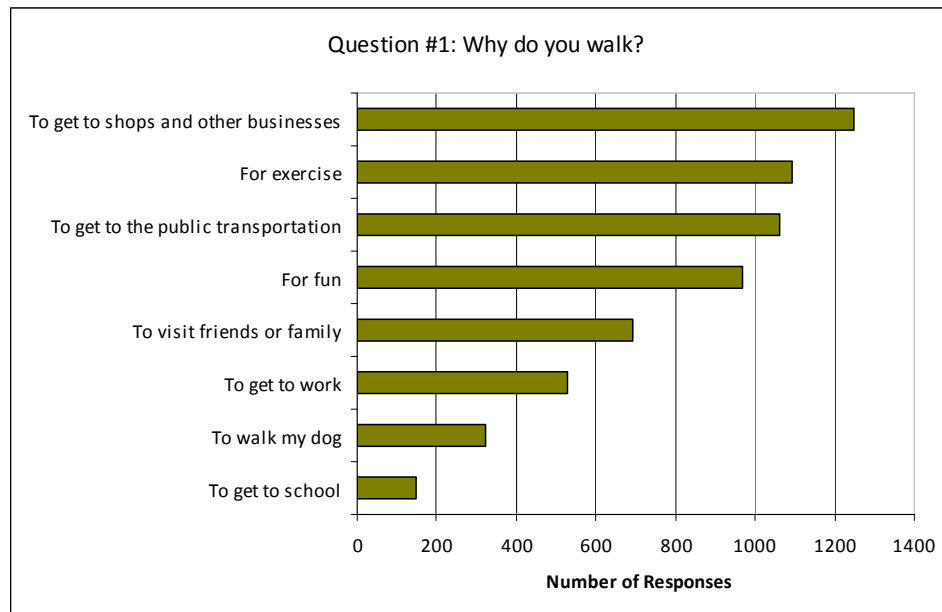| QUESTION 1 RESPONSES | QTY. | % TOT |
|---|---|---|
| To get to shops and other businesses | 1249 | 89% |
| For exercise | 1094 | 78% |
| To get to the public transportation | 1063 | 76% |
| For fun | 970 | 69% |
| To visit friends or family | 694 | 49% |
| To get to work | 529 | 38% |
| To walk my dog | 323 | 23% |
| To get to school | 149 | 11% |

**Figure 4**



**Figure 5**

Additional comments provided by the respondents regarding their walking preferences will be discussed in the Analysis section below.

*Question 2: Why don't you walk? Check all that apply. (Ten answer choices, listed below, and space for comments provided.)*

The percentage of total respondents that answered Question 2 was approximately 80%. Of these 1,111 responses, the most common response was, "The roads are too busy; There is too much traffic" (35%), followed by "No Sidewalks" (32%), and "Weather" (32%). Figure 6 shows the number of responses and percentage of all respondents per category. Figure 7 shows the distribution of the responses.

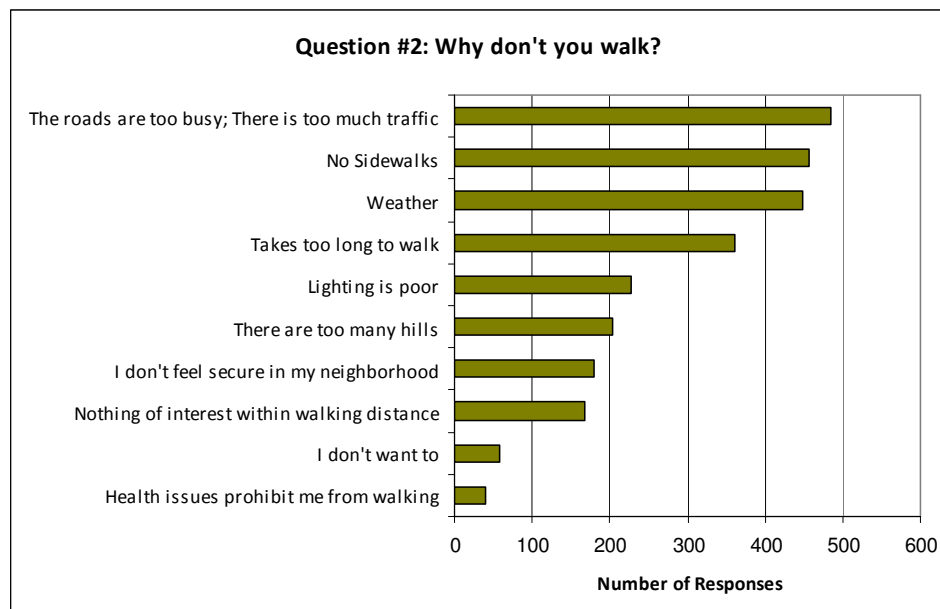| QUESTION 2 | QTY. | %TOT |
|---|---|---|
| The roads are too busy; There is too much traffic | 485 | 35% |
| No Sidewalks | 456 | 32% |
| Weather | 449 | 32% |
| Takes too long to walk | 360 | 26% |
| Lighting is poor | 227 | 16% |
| There are too many hills | 204 | 15% |
| I don't feel secure in my neighborhood | 180 | 13% |
| I don't want to | 57 | 4% |
| Health issues prohibit me from walking | 39 | 3% |

**Figure 6**



**Figure 7**

*Questions 3-6: Open-ended questions*
The survey asked several questions that allowed respondents to write in responses. Complete qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions has not been completed; rather, a sample of the most common responses is provided below each question.

*Question 3: Where do you walk? It can be in your neighborhood or anywhere in the city.*
- In my neighborhood
- Other neighborhoods in Seattle
- Seattle parks
- Business districts

*Question 4: Are there places you avoid walking? Are there routes or locations that you avoid? Why?*
- Where there are hills
- Busy streets with high traffic (e.g., Aurora Avenue)
- Places with less desirable environments (e.g., high crime areas)
- Across major highways (e.g., I-5, SR-99)
- Routes with construction adjacent to the sidewalks

*Question 5: In your opinion, what makes a great place to walk?*
- Other people walking
- Sense of public safety (i.e., places that are well lit, low crime areas)
- Beautiful places (e.g., gardens, views, trees, green spaces)
- Destinations and shops along the route
- Wide sidewalks
- Sidewalks separated from the roadway (i.e., planting strips, buffers)

*Question 6: What would encourage you to walk more?*
- More sidewalks in neighborhoods
- More crosswalks at busy intersections
- Separation of motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians
- Improvement of Burke-Gillman Trail
- More dedicated pedestrian trails
- Better public transportation
- Someone to walk with
- Less litter and more trash cans
- Lower volume of cars
- Restrooms along routes

*Question 7: Describe your favorite walk. (optional)*
The paper copies of the survey provided space for respondents to draw a picture of their favorite walk, and many took the opportunity to do so. Reproductions of a few of these drawings are available in the Pedestrian Master Plan.

***Question 11:  Yes, I'd like to stay involved to help make Seattle the most walkable city in the nation.***
Respondents were asked to provide contact information if they would like to receive information about the Pedestrian Master Plan and its development. Approximately 650 people responded and will be contacted during SDOT's public outreach process. The public outreach process will involve interacting with Seattle's neighborhood groups through meetings held in local community venues. SDOT's Pedestrian Master Plan project team will be available to provide an overview of the plan and answer questions. These meetings will take place in spring of 2009.

ANALYSIS

***Reasons People Do/Do Not Walk***
Based on the responses to Questions 1 and 2, the survey provides valuable information about the reasons Seattleites choose to walk and the reasons they avoid walking. Responses to Question 1 indicate that the most common reasons that people walk in Seattle are for the purposes of getting to shops and other businesses, for exercise, and to get to public transportation. The three most common responses to Question 2 are high traffic volumes on busy roads, lack of sidewalks, and weather. These responses are either addressed through the Pedestrian Master Plan (e.g., lack of sidewalks) or they do not have clear, tangible solutions (e.g., poor weather).

Through cross-tabulation, conclusions are drawn regarding the relationship between the neighborhoods of Seattle and the responses. The people from the neighborhoods of First Hill/Madrona, Greenwood/Greenlake, and the U-District appear to walk to shops and other businesses the most. Exercise and fun is a popular reason for walking within the Greenwood/Greenlake, First Hill/Madrona, and U-District neighborhoods. Walking to public transportation is a common reason for walking in Greenwood, Ravenna/Wedgwood, and First Hill/Madrona. Other notable walking preferences are getting to work and visiting family and friends within the neighborhoods of First Hill/Madrona and Madison Park/Montlake. A surprisingly lower percentage of surveys than expected indicated walking to school within the neighborhoods of the U-District and Ravenna/Wedgwood.

Survey responses from Northgate/Lake City indicate that a combination of busy streets and lack of sidewalks deters people from walking in these neighborhoods. Respondents in Greenwood/Greenlake indicated that their roads are too busy, and the residents of adjacent Haller Lake/Bitter Lake also avoid walking because of the lack of sidewalks. Other notable responses indicate that a high percentage of people in First Hill/Madrona choose not to walk because of the hills in this area. Security is a walking deterrent for people living or working downtown.

***Open-ended Questions (Questions 3-6)***
Responses to the open-ended questions reveal similar results to the responses for Questions 1 and 2. However, the respondents provided additional information regarding where people walk, places that they avoid walking, what makes a desirable walking environment, and what would encourage walking.

Seattle's parks are popular places for people to walk. Although Greenlake and Seward Park were the parks most often preferred by walkers, many of Seattle's smaller parks such as Myrtle Edwards, Carkeek, Magnuson, and Discovery Parks were also mentioned.

Sidewalks appear to be the most important amenity to Seattle walkers. Sidewalks are missing along some routes where people walk or want to walk, and respondents tend to avoid walking in places where sidewalks are either missing or damaged. Existing sidewalks are often cracked or are blocked by overgrown vegetation, making walking difficult. Sidewalk conditions are a concern most often in the Greenwood neighborhood north of 85th Street and in the Lake City area. Respondents indicated they also avoid hilly areas.

With regard to pedestrian safety, unpleasant conditions, unpleasant people, and low lighting were cited as issues that discourage people from walking, especially after dark. These issues were raised most frequently in the neighborhoods along Rainier Avenue and in the University District and Belltown/Downtown.

Respondents have indicated that their ideal walking environment would include shops and destinations, green spaces, views, and places to sit along the route. Crosswalks and separation between transportation modes (pedestrians, bicycles, and motor vehicles) were also noted as important. Improved public transportation routes and schedules are additional components that would encourage walking.

Survey responses from people with limited vision focused on the need for additional accessibility improvements, including tactile surfaces on walks and ramps, audible and vibrating signals, bus stops without obstacles, and easier bus route identification methods. These respondents were especially concerned with the sidewalk conditions and hills and noted that mobility training would encourage additional walking. Concerns with pedestrian access at construction sites were also noted in these surveys.

***Reasons People Walk By Age***
Of the respondents in the 19-40 age range, the most common reasons for walking were to get to shops and other businesses, to get to public transportation, and exercise. Of the respondents in the 41-64 age range, the most common responses were to get to shops and other businesses, for exercise, and for fun. Respondents 65 and older prioritized walking for exercise, to get to shops and other businesses, and to get to public transportation.